The COMPASS

AMERICAN · ASSOCIATION · OF · SOCIAL · WORKERS

130 E · 22d · St · New York City

DECEMBER, 1936 VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 3

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

PURPOSE AND VALUE OF STANDARDS IN SOCIAL WORK

by Walter West

THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION: FUNCTION AND ACTIVITIES

A Summary of the Range of Professional Concerns and the Association's Activity in Relation to Them

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The 1937 Delegate Conference, WPA Demobilization, Social Security Provisions, New Books

Personnel of National Association Committees

PURPOSE AND VALUE OF STANDARDS IN SOCIAL WORK*

The paper which is reprinted below sets forth the practical considerations in the need for a major working hypothesis for social work and suggests wherein the major obstacles to professional advance "are identical with the major difficulties faced by administration, education and interpretation and by the all-important increasing process of discovering and testing new data and acquiring greater knowledge."

WALTER WEST

STANDARDS are such common, everyday, household utilities, that I suspect there is little doubt as to their purposes or values for social work. Pounds, yards, bushels, dollars and an infinite number of standards of size, bulk, weight, and quality are the ever present devices by which life in a complicated world is simplified. A standard is for measurement of bulk, a test of quality, an identification of the genuine.

These simple and primary values are so apparently useful that there could be no question as to the desirability of having standards by which the complicated and intricate problems of social work could be simplified and clarified. When applied to social work and personnel, to be sure, it may properly be asked whether there are standards which identify competence, and many who are most intimately concerned need assurance on that point. To start with, it would be helpful to realize that standards would, if they were possible, straighten out many of the complications by which social work is made confusing to the public, and to ourselves.

Standards, in fact, are indispensable, and their necessity forces their use. All the standards employed in selecting personnel for social work are not, however, professional. There is, for instance, residence; registration as a Democrat or otherwise; the mother who has brought up her own children. "That which is established by authority, custom or general consent as a model or example; criterion; test," says Webster's *Dictionary*. In considering, at any time, the difficulties of developing professional standards—and these are conceded to be great difficulties—it is profitable to remember that without professional models, criteria or tests, the well-known enterprise of America will not fail, and that its power of invention will be sure to conjure up other standards which are not professional to simplify administration problems.

Standards of some kind are known to be indispensable. So also it may be conceded that it is of great importance in dealing with human problems, as social work does, that such standards should be the highest obtainable. If so, the ever present substitute standards, in such matters as residence, party affiliations, and what not, are too accessible to be ignored, and immediate, consistent, sustained, and maximum efforts of the professional workers and their allies will be needed to head them off.

I do not know just when professionalization of social work set in, but according to my understanding it occurred when the trials and errors of early activities disclosed facts and hypotheses about the work which was being done which could be set down to be learned and taught, and when it was seen that social work required a broad working hypothesis, and was something beyond a craft-like series of steps to be taken. The base for a professional activity can be said to be laid at the point where architecture rather than carpentry takes charge of building; where a knowledge and practice of the law concerning contract supersedes bill-collecting.

It will be observed that this is a description of certain aspects of professionalism rather than any attempt to define a profession, which I am not prepared to do. There are a few factors, however, which appear common to all the professions. The first is the dependence in each case on a body of knowledge so large that it is not possible for any one practitioner to acquire that knowledge during practice. So a period of concentrated study in which this basic knowledge has been compressed, that is to say, professional education, is substituted for craft or apprentice training.

A second factor which seems to characterize each of the professions is this: a body of knowledge broader and more comprehensive than what is required in any one particular task of operation or case. Wherever there are important aspects of a situation which may alter themselves or be altered, or where unknown factors exist in a problem—be it medicine, law, construction, or social work—a breadth and versatility or professional knowledge beyond that of the artisan, however skilled at his work he may be, are demanded. A sore throat might be painted by a druggist with skill; a mid-wife might preside at a delivery—but it is unnecessary to point out the serious limitations of these and other kinds of non-professional practice, or why, with each advance in public information about sore throats and childbirth, we rely more and more upon the resourcefulness of professional practice.

* *Reprinted with permission from the* PROCEEDINGS *of the National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, N. J., May 18-23, 1936.*

In no other kind of practice which occurs to me does the need for this factor of professional breadth and versatility appear to be more applicable than to social work. Is not social work required to meet as wide a range of problems as any profession? It seems wider than any to me. A practice which starts with unknown factors, and certainly one which involves any thing as subtle, indirect, and complicated as human motives and behavior, would seem to require a particularly careful diagnosis, whereas any rule-of-thumb method or conclusions would be patently out of order.

All this would appear to be so well known to social workers that it would not need to be restated. It happens, however, that at this crucial time, when plans are being developed for many new social programs such as those promoted by the security act and relief programs, much of the discussion on the all-important question of personnel for those programs misses this primary point completely. The apparent simplicity of the act of giving relief and the fact that time is not allowed and facilities are not provided for what are thought to be the complications of case work have led many to believe that relief personnel need only consist of persons able to go through those simple routines. This has disclosed an alarming lack of conviction on the part of social workers themselves, many of them in positions of great influence concerning the validity of the knowledge which social work has acquired. Instead, case work is apparently regarded as a series of steps to be taken in their proper order; valueless unless applied with the full force of the magic case work sequence. It is like saying that a knowledge of anatomy or physiology or contagion would not be necessary in an epidemic or under fire in an advanced field hospital, because in neither case would the qualified practitioner be able to do all the things he knew how to do, or work with all the facilities at his command in a more sheltered situation. Conviction on social work knowledge would make us recognize that *brief* contacts, lack of time, and facilities, and other characteristics of a "mass" problem create a new urgency for using the most tried and competent social workers available.

The absurdity of such a denial of basic knowledge in connection with another profession emphasizes the vital concern which social work has at this time with professional standards; how important it is to instruct ourselves and interpret to others that social work has learned that certain relationships are helpful and humane and others are stupid and destructive, and that the sum of this knowledge is professional education for social work on a professional basis of breadth and versatility, socially useful in application. I believe this concept of social work to be so important that if it could be clearly understood, many of the problems of support and interpretation could be liquidated; the relationship of education to practice would be clarified, where in many places it is now doubted and obscured; and standards could be set and maintained where they are now weak or broken.

Looking at social work history and development it is possible to understand why this essential professional principle has been slow to emerge and is but little comprehended. Each kind of social work started as an individual enterprise. Each staff had certain things to do with people as individuals or as groups. A charity organization society attempted a certain program, and required of its staff skilled performance at a set of steps to be taken from the time a case applied until it was closed. A protective society had a different hypothesis and a different series of tasks to be completed, and so on through the list of agencies public and private—child placing, hospital work, public work, group work and what not—which sprang up to represent, on the whole, benevolent motives of the sponsors of these enterprises. This is, of course, a conveniently oversimplified picture of social work at any one time.

It may be assumed that professional perspective was induced by the wide area of human problems, experience, and behavior with which social work came in contact. It is safe to assume, however, that it was at first dimly perceived and imperfectly comprehended, and that it was identified as professional only after a strong root growth had been established. It was required to grow and develop in an unfavorable setting. It is not surprising, therefore, that the professional aspects of social work are still opposed by hostilities which are intrenched in vestiges of original organization forms and in competitions between agency programs, and by a lack of conviction in the social workers whose advent and experience in social work have been conditioned by all these influences.

Public programs and social agencies, confronted by public indifference to the social problems they dealt with, were forced into missionary attitudes in their zeal to extend their good works. An indication of the ensuing pressure under which social work developed is seen in the fact that measures adopted by some agencies to raise funds were so bad as to require reform. Standards as to money-raising were formulated. Limits were sought for percentage commissions paid to collectors, and other devices, such as charity balls, football, and other benefits were frowned upon. Expansion of service went forward, however, at

a greater rate than that of public comprehension. I should like to point out here that public comprehension lagged partly because agency staffs were expanding their concepts of their work, and agency programs developed faster than the staffs were able to prove their work and their usefulness in line with the increasing needs for supporters and funds. This led to a condition of dualism and pronounced agency "split" personality: raising money for a limited purpose, and spending on a broader one. This was bound to confuse the public and to retard the development of sound testing and deliberate study of social work programs.

The financial problem is stressed here to show some of the tensions which were created in social work development which were hostile to professional growth, and still are. Under such pressure it is not surprising that agencies, and social workers, failed to notice the growing scope of social work; failed to notice that in practice social workers had learned and were passing on to one another, certain knowledge about people and their problems, and about methods of dealing with those problems; and further failed to understand the significance of this discovery, which has profound meaning to the social work of the future.

A further look at the financial problem discloses indications that some of our cherished notions about social work, which offered the greatest resistance to the development of professional knowledge and education, were invented as financial devices. Each agency, as it was organized, undertook to deal with different social problems, naturally enough, but under the whip of financial need social workers were rallied around these separatist banners. To interest a new group of supporters, a second agency was impelled to find a new set of steps to take, which could be readily distinguished from those of other agencies. It would not be practical to set up "child-placing agency number two," or "family agency number six." To make the most effective appeal to givers, great emphasis was needed on the special social problem dealt with. To provide this emphasis it was necessary to train the workers of each agency in a different set of things to be done, and around these separate banners strong agency loyalties were born and fostered.

Under such confusion of agency existence, nevertheless, professionalism did develop, and it is conceivable that the many differences helped to visualize certain aspects of the total social work problem. I would not be prepared to deny that it was so. What I believe to be necessary at this time, however, is to root out with no loss of time, the still flourishing fancy that each segment of a human problem needs a different kind of person to deal with it, with a different training, and with a whole set of loyalties to special methods, or to a special clientele identified by its separate problem. To perpetuate uncritically, the inessential differences in clientele, in problem, and in method, is to follow the road back to a number of limited segmental practices in which any general knowledge of human motivation and behavior, about social, political, or economic problems is denied validity.

I hasten to add that I am not expecting to do away with agencies or with their financial needs. To combat the influence of outworn concepts, it would be well to restate occasionally that what is known about widows is very much the same as what is known about women living with husbands, or for that matter about maiden ladies. Children within their own homes are much like those outside of them. An "unemployable," God help us for that term, is certainly not so unlike an "employable" that we need a different governmental unit to deal with him.

I would not say that all problems are the same, or that certain methods might not require some special and distinctive practice. But I would deny professional breadth or versatility to any social work which limits its usefulness to the comparatively minor differences, and does not recognize that knowledge of people and of their problems, and methods of dealing with problems, are the broad basis on which all social work must rest. In other words, professional social work might be done with dependent children, exclusively, or with families exclusively, or with any of the special problems with which any existing agencies deal. Specialties are adaptations of something generic, and there may likely be adaptations of social work to age groups, to rural counties,

THE COMPASS

Published monthly except September by
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

130 EAST 22ND STREET NEW YORK, N. Y.
VOLUME XVIII NUMBER 3

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the Act of August 24, 1912

Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 28, 1924.

Subscription: Non-Members $1.00 per annum. Subscription of members of the Association included in annual dues.

to groups, to individuals, along racial or religious lines, or under public or private auspices. But I believe that one reason why social work has not had a higher place in public esteem, is that financial and other competitive rivalries have led agencies to represent their work, and their workers, as having importance only within the relatively fractional and unimpressive area which differentiated them from the work and workers of other agencies. If the public is aware only of limited ability necessary to find suitable boarding homes, or to go through whatever steps are necessary preliminary to a relief grant, it could be pardoned for not understanding why college education, through grounding in social sciences, or a year or two of special study in a professional school, should be required for the performance of those simple tasks.

With the origins of social work, so related to the exploitation of particular problems and remedies, the concept of a generic body of knowledge about people, useful in all forms of social work alike, has been delayed. Formidable resistance has been presented by the whole superstructure of agency, board, staff training, national agency, councils, chests, social work publicity, and so on, and it is not to be wondered at that a lack of conviction and understanding has persisted among the social workers.

The emphasis on inessential differences and resulting complexity and competition of agencies and programs have presented a second major obstacle to professional advance, by standing in the way of open professional criticism and discussion. Another impediment to professional growth has been the fact that our professional education, with origins in agency training courses, has not been able to free itself entirely from the craft stage. Agency traditions have been kept alive in education by the personnel available for school staffs and by the field work contacts with special agencies. The schools of social work have been among the most potent of the progressive influences at work against the trade, or guild, or craft stage of social work. They have furnished avenues of escape from the apprentice system of training, which, while effective in many ways, could not by its natural limitations rise to the general level of professional education. At no point is a profession so vulnerable as at that of professional education and in maintaining professional standards; no asset is so jealously to be guarded.

As long as there are major weaknesses in the schools of social work, it may be legitimate to utilize other educational devices. Any rejection of the professional schools, however, should be given rigid inspection. Is it derived from the fact that the schools have not acquired the most advanced knowledge? If that is so, the situation would be on the way to be corrected because the full force of professional effort and organization could be utilized to bring any sound and tested knowledge and theory into the schools. I suspect that much of the lack of conviction about the schools of social work reflects a lack of understanding of the vital fact that social work is more than a particular and limited craft practice which certain agencies emphasize.

Professional development in social work is synonymous with increasing knowledge about social problems—knowledge which is tested scientifically, and put into service by the persons to whom it has been transmitted. It is the central question of the substance of social work, the ways in which social workers are equipped to put that substance into practice, and the basis for sound social work expansion and interpretation. The obstacles and limitations which have hindered professional development are identical with the major difficulties faced by administration, education, and interpretation, and by the all-important increasing process of discovering and testing new data and acquiring greater knowledge.

The knowledge which makes social work professional is embodied in the social workers to whom it has been imparted. The constant and pressing problems of administration—imperfectly appreciated, I fear, by some administrators—is to give to social work the chance to make its full contribution in the persons of these social workers. This brings us back to the problem of standards. How can the social workers be identified so they can be put to work? Even the most practiced eye cannot be depended on. Professional standards are therefore sought as a test of quality —a means of identifying the genuine.

How are the professional standards to be developed and maintained? All the known devices of formulation, examination, and certification may be employed, and these may be promoted by advertising and argument. These are methods which suggest themselves. This will continue to be slow going, however, until social workers use every avenue of interchange with one another to develop and deepen their own conviction that social work has a socially useful knowledge, applicable through the service of its practitioners—a conviction strong enough to influence daily decision and interpretation and to keep their hopes attached to further professional growth through education.

THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION: FUNCTION AND ACTIVITIES

FOR the first meeting of the Executive Committee this fall the following descriptive statement of the Association's function and activities was drawn up by the Executive Secretary. The immediate objective was to place before the Executive Committee the urgent and long range problems of social work so that the committee might determine the most effective use of the Association's machinery, resources and influence in dealing with these problems during the year ahead. The statement is reprinted here for the use of the membership as a whole since it summarizes in concise form the experience of the Association in recent years as it relates to the kind of organization it is or might be, the range of its concerns and the hypotheses on which it has based its program decisions. It is a summary which draws on social workers' experience as that is reflected in the volume of requests and correspondence of the Association, the records of chapter activities and discussions, and also the discussions and decisions of the Executive and other committees.

The material as presented includes first, certain concepts about social work which affect the function of a professional association; second, a general summary of areas of activities of the Association; and third, a description of the Association resources and the existing machinery through which it operates.

A complete list of the personnel of the Association's national committees for 1936-37 is also included in this issue of *The Compass*.

A. SOCIAL WORK AND THE FUNCTION OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Some general concepts about social work practice have weighted heavily the development of the Association's activities in recent years. These concepts stem from the beginnings of the Association but as they have developed they have been employed to create what is believed to be a more integrated and more purposeful program. These were not adapted consciously as analogies from other professional history but it may be significant that analogies exist suggesting the possibility that they are natural to professional development:

1. Recognition and consistent action on the hypothesis that the practice of social work requires a considerable body of knowledge. It is like other professional occupations in that successful practice depends almost entirely on a combination of skilled performance built around comprehensive knowledge. It shares with other professions the characteristic that the practitioner must know enough and have discrimination enough and versatility enough to do one or more of many possible things in each instance of practice. It is a kind of practice which has to deal with unknown factors and which has to diagnose and plan.

2. It follows that the only way to employ this combination of knowledge and practice in service is by its embodiment in individuals and through the placing of such persons in positions to practice social work. The value and quality of a social work program is therefore seen to be determined by the extent to which professional personnel is employed.

3. It likewise follows that policy should be derived from practice and should be as free as possible from dictation by external factors. Interference in teaching or medical practice or engineering by political influence or public opinion would be recognized as anti-professional. Social work practice has been slow to liberate itself from external influences inherent in its origins in agencies and categorical controls, and the emergence of essential professional principles therefore has been delayed and their recognition obscured. A professional association provides a channel for this liberation which is not found in the employment relationships of most social workers.

B. ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES.

Range of Activities. Based on these hypotheses, the scope of the Association's activities is seen to be aimed at the development of available, competent personnel (the problem of professional education); means of identification of competence (professional standards); means by which competent personnel can be selected and utilized; means by which working conditions can be made most favorable to the liberation of competence (employment practices); interpretation of the facts of social work to the public; channels through which professional experience may be brought to bear on social problems and administrative devices for dealing with those problems (government and social work); the continual conversion of practice experience into greater professional content and transmissable knowledge; activities which build up the Association itself as a means of making the professional personnel of social work a more dynamic factor in the development of professional understanding and practice.

As a matter of fact the problems of social work would define the range of professional concerns

as in any other profession. The rapid development of professional activity in social work given special impetus by the spotlight thrown on the personnel of the enlarged public programs (as a contrast to the subordination of the professional personnel factor in the private agency programs) has demanded a sudden broadening and diversification of the professional association's activities.

Form of Activities. What form do the Association's activities take? Some become visible in formulations, publications, public testimony, conferences. On the other hand the main "case load" includes consciousness of ideas in the process of formulation and of application to the professional problems facing the membership through the various stages of correspondence, field visits, committee meetings, and through *Compass* articles, conference papers, chapter bulletins, publications, and official actions. The problems of the membership arise as local matters. A few become general enough to assume national aspects, but even so the direct application is in the terms of social work where it is practiced. The aim of the Association's activities is therefore directed toward the professional activities of the membership through the chapters. The activities are valid in so far as they are demonstrable in practice.

Some of the subjects on which the Association staff and committees have been working are:

1. *Professional Education and Standards.*

Perhaps no subject represents more clearly the variety of the form of professional activities. It is clear that the Association does not conduct a professional school, nor control nor regulate any system of professional education. Still, no other aspect of the total professional problem is involved in so many phases of the Association's work.

As the culmination of several years of discussion about professional equipment, the membership requirements were shifted from experience to education in 1929 to go into effect in 1933. The very considerable influence of these requirements as the possible definition of the social worker was transferred at that time to professional education. Before and since that date the Association has had ample evidence that a conviction as to the validity of professional education and an understanding of what it implied are needed most within the profession of social work itself. Attitudes toward the large number of emergency workers and other workers in the field without professional equipment, toward the "rank and file" movement, toward the non-professional administrators; attitudes regarding the several fields of social work, problems of employment in various kinds of agencies, current issues regarding the extension of civil service, and so forth, are all daily situations in which a consistent policy regarding professional education is involved.

Too much is known of the history and of the variations in schools of social work to evade the fact that professional education is in its primitive stage and that many of its weaknesses compromise the attempts to base standards on it. Being interested in professional education as the basis of standards and recognizing that the problems of content and method are of vital concern to practicing workers, the Association views as a major part of its program the development of professional education itself. It also has the primary responsibility for furthering the belief in its validity, first in the professional group and then in the community at large.

Professional standards are a part of the everyday load of the Association, to be dealt with in terms of definition, of chapters, agencies, or individual problems. Recognizing that great pressure exists for lower levels of selection in the enlarging public programs, it appears that the resistance of social workers and social agencies is inadequate in the face of this threat to the major administrative responsibility, namely, the selection of qualified personnel. The Association endeavors to keep in constant circulation all the available material on classification, job descriptions, tests, and other facts of importance to methods of selection.

The biographical directory of the membership recently published listing the professional education and experience of social workers serves as tangible evidence that a broad professional basis of activities exists in social work.

This Association began as an organization of persons presumably performing related social services; a selected membership. There immediately developed the problem of determining who was a qualified social worker, and what were the qualities and experiences which provided the equipment for endorsement by the professional Association. The membership requirements in use since 1933 represent the current definition of such qualities and experience. The persistent and increasingly intensive membership work by the Association's staff and committees in applying the workable and useful basic definition of the qualified worker contained in the membership requirements, has brought returns of great value to the public, as well as to social work and social workers.

Definitions can be increasingly in terms of professional education. Instead of attempting to evaluate experience in terms of the environmental value of an agency's practice, the application of the present membership standards tends toward the more professionally useful methods of appraising the proficiency of the applicant in terms of

common educational experience. We may be approaching the time when, instead of judging a worker by the agency which employs him, it will be possible to appraise the agency by the quality of its staff in relation to professional standards.

2. *Employment Practices.*

A consistent thread running through a professional program is that the qualitative development of professional services is in the interest of clients and of the public at large. Unlike some issues in which the "rights" of one group may conflict with the interests of others, the protection of working conditions for a professional group coincides with its serviceability.

Efforts by the Association to secure recognition of the need for stability and security in the employment relationships of social workers are inherent in whatever is achieved in regard to personnel standards. Security, rates of pay, freedom from the interference of arbitrary rulings not in accord with the interests of practice, are in direct proportion to the esteem in which the service is held.

Because of the great degree to which employment relationships affect the performance of a professional service, it is seen to constitute one of the administrative problems in which policy should be most sensitive to practice. The Association's efforts in this area are directed at the general problem of resolving from practice itself, the formulations of policy which the profession can recommend. It finds itself operating in an area, however, where traditional concepts of labor-employer "rights" and "civil liberties" have held sway longer than the professional concept. As in the matter of standards, it finds that the immediate objective is to create a working understanding of the relationship between personnel standards and working conditions on the part of the professional group itself.

Particular activities of the Association in this field have related to: a bibliography, a suggested basis for contractual understanding of employment practices, some suggested norms of reasonable working relationships, the omission of social workers and other employes from insurance provisions of the Social Security Act, retirement plans, and action on grievances and complaints.

3. *The Extent and Nature of Social Services.*

It would seem axiomatic that any profession would have competent testimony on the extent of need for its services, on the problems of clients and on the administrative devices for meeting those needs. In this area, again, traditional factors have obscured the issue both for the social workers and for the public.

The Association has provided a channel now in extensive use by chapters, by national committees, and elsewhere, for converting practice experience into public information. Preoccupation with the vast relief programs which were recognized as basic to development of other social services has resulted in a great degree of concentration of these activities in the past few years on that particular aspect of public services. The work of the Association from its early activity with the Costigan-LaFollette hearings to the present need not be detailed. Present activities of the Division on Government and Social Work include: Continual iteration and argument on need for a general federal assistance program, persistent attempts to clarify issues involved in the present confused situation, and efforts to secure and interpret data bearing on policies.

4. *Interpretation.*

This part of the Association activity begins with its reports to the membership and extends to a wider public as material and means are available. To other resources of the Association, a staff member was added last year to intensify the interpretation of material in hand, and to broaden the field to be reached.

The Compass, into which special efforts have been put during recent years, the Association's Delegate Conferences, some use of national and state conferences, discussion material circulated to chapters, publicity and other distribution for material from the Association's work are the channels which the Association is developing for professional interpretation.

During the past year wide publicity was given the Survey of twenty-five states, the New Jersey Relief Study, the Chicago Chapter Study, the Delegate Conference, supplemented by other releases on the relief situation, and a wide range of contacts were made with newspapers, special writers, syndicates, and so forth.

The Association's active publication list includes:

This Business of Relief; Directory of Members; Social Case Work: Generic and Specific; Social Work Ethics, Job Analysis Series— The Social Worker in Family, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work (out of print); The Social Worker in Group Work; The Social Worker in Child Care and Protection; Vocational Guidance in Action; The Social Worker in the Prevention and Treatment of Delinquency; Pamphlets — Some Points on Professional Standards; A Report on Group Discussion; What Skills Do Relief Workers Need?; Civil Service and Social Work; Professional Standards in Social Work; Professional Protection for the Social Worker; Application of a Voluntary Merit System for Public Welfare Personnel; Relationship of Professional Practice to Professional Education; Employment Practices in Social Work; Social Work as a Career.

C. ASSOCIATION RESOURCES AND MACHINERY.

The Association consists of: 10,000 members; 72 chapters, including about 95 per cent of the total membership; five state councils representing the chapters and non-chapter members of these states.

The national officers and the Executive Committee are charged by the By-Laws with administration of the AASW, consistent with actions taken by the membership. The size of membership naturally throws responsibility for practically all management on this Committee. The six elective officers and nine elected members and Chairmen of Standing Committees compose the Executive Committee. An Ad Interim Committee composed of members of the Executive Committee within convenient call of the national office functions for the Executive Committee on matters of accepted policy between meetings of the whole Committee.

A Nominating Committee provides a ballot for the use of the membership in electing officers and the Executive Committee.

National Committees to which are delegated by the Executive Committee certain subjects or areas of Association responsibility. A list of national committees as appointed for the current year is attached.

Financial resources amounting to approximately $89,000 in 1936. Of this amount about $14,000 is chapter money and the remainder finances the national activities.

The membership voice in the AASW is expressed in the Delegate Conference, and in the election of officers and Executive Committee. Less formal expression comes through contacts with chapters and members, through committees and through correspondence.

A national office and staff which carries out the plans made by the Executive Committee assisting the various national committees to function on the work assigned to them, collects and brings before the committees the material bearing on their assignments, develops correspondence and direct contacts with chapters and members, publishes the *Compass,* chapter bulletins, etc., and makes contacts of many kinds with other social work agencies, other professional agencies, and with such public interests as bear on social work, and also carries out the heavy routine business required by a selective membership organization. The staff consists of the executive secretary and three assistant secretaries, the office manager, the membership assistant, five secretary-stenographers, a bookkeeper, and two clerks.

Underlying the activities which the National office and committees are able to undertake are the primary functions of keeping a growing selective membership organization together, and in discharging the routine responsibilities incurred by a national office in a profession which has been getting increased national and local attention. Without making a complete list of these office duties, some indication of the volume of routine work essential to such an organization and bearing on its resources is necessary. For instance:

The Association office, following preliminary membership work by chapters, makes a careful check of each application, checking with inactive files, recording qualifications for reference and tabulation, sends for references and school credits, except in chapter territory, checks applications with college and professional school catalogues, and carries on in the case of many applications extended correspondence with the applicant, references, schools and chapters. The process is repeated on applications for reinstatement, and responsibility is also accepted for transfer from junior to full membership.

Approximately 600 changes of address are recorded monthly on the various membership lists required to be kept. Lists of chapter officers and committees are maintained, and reports of chapter activities indexed.

A modest business amounting to $1,500 to $2,000 annually is done in publication sales in small accounts.

To collect the Association dues will require approximately 22,000 bills this year, the recording of over 10,000 payments, and the naturally detailed bookkeeping required for handling this large number of accounts. Delayed and delinquent payments require monthly sorting of all membership records and special correspondence on delayed payments estimated at approximately 4,000 letters annually. Approximately 2,000 general inquiries about membership, the vocational possibilities in social work, inquiries for literature, etc., are received.

Each transaction involving dues, changes of address, and membership applications requires one or more notifications to a chapter.

AASW Government Program Discussed

Growing confusion about WPA policies, and lack of information about relief policies and practice in many states and localities are part of the difficulties the new Congress will face in finding a satisfactory solution to the continuing need for relief.

Discussion of needs and services by the Division on Government and Social Work and by the Executive Committee indicated that the in-

fluence of the Association should be directed this year to such things as:

1. Advocating as before, that the federal government should cooperate with the state and local governments in a program of general assistance; the federal government to add grants-in-aid for this purpose to others now in force. The principles of the "Outline for a Federal Assistance Program", adopted last year, were endorsed.

2. Resisting cuts in WPA rolls except as jobs in private industry or on public works are found for WPA workers. As WPA has been put on a means basis, it is difficult to oppose reductions based on a needs test, but the Executive Committee calls attention to the importance of establishing governmental employment at prevailing wages on the basis of ability to work, instead of on a needs basis.

3. Supporting the assistance provisions and grants-in-aid of the Security Act.

4. Working for amendments to the Security Act which would provide wider coverage for old age benefits and unemployment insurance.

5. Continuing to secure and make public data on unmet needs and on gaps in the sum of the federal, state, and local programs, facts about those in need, and information bearing on administrative policies.

6. Following closely the proposals to reorganize the welfare bureaus and administrations of the federal government.

7. Continuing the Association's influence in favor of a thoroughgoing study of the whole relief situation as a base for developing a long time program of federal, state, and local cooperation.

The Executive Committee has also requested the Division to consider cash benefits for illness as a means of reducing the number of families needing assistance by removing the need in case of temporary illness causing wage loss.

The 1937 Delegate Conference

The Association's National Committee on Conferences in line with its assignment has continued to cast up some of the professional elements in social work which should be portrayed in AASW conferences for the year 1936-1937. The Committee has focused special attention this fall upon plans for the 1937 Delegate Conference and has framed its recommendations to the Executive Committee in this connection.

The Committee has recommended that this Conference for 1937 be again held in Washington, D. C., in February, at the Mayflower Hotel. The dates set tentatively are: February, 19, 20 and 21. Consideration was given to the question of pooling and distributing pro rata by chapters the travel expenses for delegate attendance with a view to dealing with geographical inequities. It was felt, however, that since such a system would amount to mandatory attendance and assessment, considerable difficulty in operation would result. It was therefore agreed to abandon the proposition for the present.

Chapter selection of delegates, the Committee felt, should be guided by the principle of competence, interest in professional issues, and capacity for productive activity, whether official or unofficial, in the chapter. These are the only principles of choice relevant to the purpose of the professional Association's annual conference.

Consideration of the use of formal papers and general discussion in program planning led to a recommendation that both be employed. The discussion process forces upon delegates the difficult task of transmitting their experience to the larger membership. Papers present other kinds of limitations. The proportionate use of the two processes depends upon the character of the subject matter which is proposed for Conference purposes.

The tentative program for the Delegate Conference has been outlined with reference to the present professional issues before the Association.

The program and published proceedings of the 1936 Conference formulated material which had been under Conference scrutiny for two years and which stemmed back as far as professional social work's testimony and recommendations in connection with the 1931 and 1932 Senate Committee hearings on the Costigan-LaFollette Bill for Federal Relief. The AASW platform and supporting papers on the subject of a permanent public assistance program are being used in the present transition from emergency to permanent provisions for public assistance in federal, state and local programs. The AASW 1936 platform still provides a frame of reference for social workers on questions relating to gaps in existing provisions. Reaffirmation by the 1937 Delegate Conference of that platform in the light of current events may be in order.

Further than that, the present need is to analyze and formulate more clearly the professional social work principles which have given direction to AASW thinking on public welfare issues and to identify and state more clearly the problems now confronting social work under both public and private auspices.

The principles of professional operation in assistance programs need to be examined by the Delegate Conference along the lines of the following tentatively formulated points which could be dealt with in papers by individual delegates, in discussion, and in national and chapter committee study to provide data for conference consideration:

1. *The current operation of assistance provisions*

Up-to-date facts about various assistance needs; ways in which these needs are being met; the adequacy of various provisions in terms of coverage, standards of personnel and relief, administrative machinery, coordination with other provisions, etc.

Fresh analysis of current misconceptions about unemployment, relief needs, relief clients, and factors responsible for continued dependence. Ways and means of attacking "unemployability" as an uninvestigated complex of problems.

The struggle to define the functions of private social work, the public's conceptions of these functions, the problems of support, the pressures upon private agencies to resume coverage functions, etc.

2. *The professional contribution to public administration*

What are the facts about relief and what is it necessary to know in order to deal with these; the relationship here between administration and personnel; professional development as shown in skills of practice and in the process of group thinking; the Association as the embodiment of the present status of professional social work in conscious group accomplishment.

Is administration a professional or extra-professional function? What is the relation of administration to practice (or service)? Do we have to recognize that we have been slow to acknowledge and define administration as an enabling function inextricably related to the practice functions and therefore grounded on the same professional training and experience?

3. *Present professional problems of social work*

Some definition of what are to be considered professional problems of today; the relationship between function and professional education; definition and boundaries of problems that block professional progress in different functional areas in social work; boundaries between professional and pre-professional and between professional and extra-professional operations today. What we see in education for persons in the field whose functions are illy defined and tied in with personnel standards.

4. *An examination of social action as a professional function*

Factors that make it professional rather than otherwise; questions of how to build professional social action around social work observation and experience rather than building it out of an economic or other system per se; possible use of social work differentials born out of observations established in actual social work practice. For instance, endorsement of child labor legislation is a matter of recognizing collective needs. Here and in the case of minimum wage legislation, social workers have rich data which do not emerge if we make ready declamation without going to work to make the supporting facts available. Wherever social work has fought for extended age limits under compulsory education laws but has not followed through sufficiently to produce data on differential needs that emerge from the experience of social work there is a lag in professional social action. Again, social work knows why and approximately what insurance coverage is needed and knows what will happen if attention to this is not gained—whereas social work practice does not necessarily know the merits in different means of making the money available.

Without a recognized philosophy of professional social action, social workers depend for opinion on social questions upon the individual's private tolerance; that is to say, if professional social action is founded on the facts and conclusions of practice, then the principles which guide it can be more reliably made the subject matter of professional education and discipline instead of being left to individualistic and therefore professionally irresponsible choice.

5. *Professional social work responsibility for sponsorship and support of its practice under public and private auspices*

Questions of direct responsibility for interpretation of what social work practice is; questions of discrepancy between what present social work practice can justify and what in money raising it may be claimed that social work can accomplish; questions of professional problems in agency competition in process of gaining lay sponsorship and support. Questions of professional function and the need for professional controls for social work practice.

It was also thought that there might be a session on a statement of standard employment practices presented as evidence of professional principles and as a functional use of devices for liberating quality of service in social work.

Much of the subject matter suggested for the program is controversial and should lead to further association work that might require several years of study. Until some of the problems suggested are set forth and the ground laid for separating what professional social work has already accomplished and what hurdles must be taken before further progress can be made, it is probable

that most members are not in position to see and work at the issues.

Many of the problems suggested can be made clearer against a background of factual data on what is happening at various points throughout the field, which data individual members and chapters can set forth.

Coverage for Non-Profit Organizations Under Social Security Act

Congress will be asked for many amendments to the Social Security Act and among those which will seek wider inclusion for old age pensions and unemployment insurance will be requests that those sections of the Act should be applied to social work organizations.

Employees of social work organizations are now excluded from the insurance benefits of the act because, "The term 'employment' means any service, of whatever nature, performed within the United States by an employee for his employer, except— . . . (8) Service performed in the employ of a corporation, community chest, fund, or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual." Non-profit organizations therefore, are not regarded as employers under the terms of the Act. Such agencies are exempt also from the payroll taxes provided in the Act.

The Executive Committee of the Association has instructed the staff and the several divisions of the Association to press this matter immediately, securing such cooperation as is possible from other agencies, together with assistance from the chapters and members.

Executive Committee action was taken in favor of broader coverage generally. It was also recognized that the unemployment insurance provisions do not definitely exclude employees of non-profit agencies but that state acts are permitted to do so. In most of the state acts passed to date, these exclusions have followed the general definition of employer as laid down in the federal act.

The Association, in connection with a number of other social work agencies, made special efforts to secure inclusion of non-profit agencies under the terms of the Social Security Act when it was under consideration by Congress. As proposed by the President's Commission on Economic Security, the original Wagner-Lewis Act provided coverage of non-profit agencies. Protests against such inclusion came from private schools and universities, hospitals and church organizations. The principal arguments were made on the basis that such organizations were traditionally exempt from taxation. Nationally, social work organizations were almost unanimous in opposing such exclusions and argued on the other hand that non-profit organizations, being social in their purpose, should welcome taxation for the purpose of social security legislation.

If it is impossible to secure the cooperation of the more powerful influences in the field of non-profit organizations generally, it is possible that a move will be made to include social work organizations if they can be defined, even though the hospitals, universities, church groups, etc., continue to oppose such inclusion.

It is recognized that all employees in the social work field could not be included under the Act as it is at present because the federal government is unable to tax the local and state governments which employ many of them. Efforts can be made, however, to revise the Social Security Act in such a way that employees may be included even though no payroll tax is possible in such cases, and it is also possible to move for retirement plans in the state and local governments.

WPA Demobilization

TAKING soundings on the feasibility and desirability of the present program for reducing the WPA, the *United States News* wired the Executive Secretary of the AASW asking him to prepare immediately a brief statement to be included in a symposium on the subject. The *News* suggested that these questions be considered: Should WPA rolls be reduced? If you believe it possible to reduce rolls, what proportion of relief workers could be laid off without causing undue hardship? Should present system of handling relief problem be continued? Are adequate standards of care for needy being maintained now? What is final solution of relief problem period? Do you think relief problem is permanent?

The following statement was prepared by Mr. West in answer to these questions:

WPA is the way in which more than two million families in the United States are living today. I mean by that something often overlooked, that WPA means to those families their food, their homes, the possession of their children, their meager pleasures, and when threats of change of plans and layoffs are not too frequent, the respite from overwhelming anxiety.

If we keep those fellow citizens in mind demobilization of WPA has no business to be anything but orderly and reasonable. Even if we were sure that some of the workers could find other employment, or even if we could not give an endorsement to all the projects, any percentage cuts or drastic reduction would be unwise and tragic. The way to demobilize is to get other jobs for the men and women who are working on WPA, and now that WPA has become a relief

program, it would also be possible to eliminate some who are not in need. This can only be determined by careful inquiry, not by percentages.

I believe that nearly all social workers who are close to the problems of persons who are in need would join me in opposing peremptory reductions in the WPA program. Most of them would also agree that we do not have in this country a well coordinated plan of federal, state and local relief, and that when the federal government shifted its emphasis to WPA it took a backward rather than a forward step toward the organization of a rational plan.

Everything which can be said against hasty and arbitrary cuts in WPA at this time were sound arguments against the shift to WPA a year ago, and the number who are now threatened with layoffs from WPA is but a tiny fraction of the number of persons who were thrown back on overburdened and sometimes non-existent local relief agencies at that time. Some of the persons who need relief have been given WPA jobs which were on a better basis for them than former relief rates, but about as many of those for whom the government did not have jobs available were lost sight of. Meanwhile some of these have been picked up again under the Social Security Act, but the whole relief picture, federal, state, and local, would certainly not impress anyone by the intelligence of its design.

Everyone who knows the present relief load is aware that we have a long-time relief program ahead of us in this country. We know also that relief does not have to be as humiliating and degrading as it frequently is. We know that it is not necessary to have relief conflict with absorption into industry if it is well handled. We know that work relief is neither good work nor good relief and that a system of basic relief, supplemented by as many real jobs as possible provided by the government when not available in private industry, with eligibility related to a soundly developed employment service, could be worked out by cooperative effort of the federal, state, and local governments for this nation.

While urging that no drastic steps be taken on WPA reductions, I believe that no further time should be wasted in developing a non-partisan commission to be appointed by the President or Congress which would make a thorough-going study of the whole relief situation, looking toward the development of a realistic program of public assistance.

Nominating Committee Asks For Chapter Suggestions

The Nominating Committee has sent a memorandum to each chapter, requesting suggestions for candidates for the vacancies which will occur next summer in the Association list of officers and committees.

The memorandum suggests that chapter nominating committees might also discuss considerations which would be useful in drawing up the nominating slate.

Members of the Nominating Committee for this year are Frank J. Bruno, St. Louis, chairman; Helen Hanchette, Cleveland; Betsey Libbey, Philadelphia; George Rabinoff, New York; and Forrester B. Washington, Atlanta.

National Office Representative Reports Western Chapters Active

Returning from a western trip which included a three day institute on interpretation at the Colorado State Conference of Social Work at Denver, visits to the Chicago, Omaha and Kansas City chapters, Thomas H. Hoare, in charge of interpretive activities at the national office, submitted a report of his contacts with western chapters. Herewith is a condensed version of his notes.

The Denver and Colorado Springs Chapters participated in the annual Colorado Conference of Social Work at Denver, December 3rd to 5th, publishing jointly with the Conference body a four page tabloid newspaper, "Changing Times", which aided immeasurably in creating an interest in the Conference throughout the state.

It is planned to issue the paper quarterly during the year. Blanche Ferguson, chairman of the Denver Chapter Committee on Interpretation, is a member of the board of editors. Reports indicate that the Colorado Conference was one of the most successful in recent years in terms of attendance and plans developed for future activity.

A relief crisis in Omaha, Nebraska (Douglass County), has been aggravated by the fact that the County Commissioners, in refusing to set up a program which would comply with the rules of the Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration, have deprived that county of state funds for general relief. The County Intake Department has been closed since April 30th. Private agencies are being swamped with pleas for food, shelter, clothes and coal. The situation is considered critical by chest agency executives, as subzero weather threatens. Chapter committees are working in close co-operation with citizens' groups in an effort to effect a solution.

Kansas City (Missouri) Chapter members are going ahead with their plan of holding frequent discussion meetings of small groups, concentrating on professional standards and competence, as one means of relating training and experience to practice. The group discussion plan, according to the Chapter Chairman, Lyman Ford, has brought worth while results.

Kansas City faces a serious problem at the present moment. Jackson County officials have declined to take over responsibility for relief. City officials have offered to assume responsibility on the condition that they may control organization and personnel policies. An impasse was reached when the federal government declined to accept this offer. Relief responsibility consists of distribution of federal commodities, distribution of milk, and WPA and CCC certification.

Ruth Coleman Vindicated

Civil Service Commission Decision Restores Her to Post; Regulations Broadened as Result

Ruth Coleman, assistant director of the Cook County (Chicago) Bureau of Public Welfare, was exonerated and reinstated in her position on November 18th, following a hearing before the County Civil Service Commission on charges of wrongful treatment of the public. The charges were filed by her immediate superior, Joseph L. Moss, "without prejudice."

The hearing resulted from a controversy which followed the publication of an article by Paul De Kruif in the magazine *Coronet,* in which he charged that Miss Coleman had delayed unnecessarily the granting of an order for free anti-rabitic serum to the parents of a four-year-old boy who had been bitten by a dog. The boy died after receiving the treatment. De Kruif charged that Miss Coleman had declined to issue the order until she could investigate the family's finances, and placed responsibility for the death of the child on the fact that a day had elapsed between the initial application for the serum and the granting of the order.

Facts brought out at the hearing indicated that De Kruif was neither scientific nor accurate in his article. Under the provisions of the Illinois State Law, testimony at the hearing revealed, persons bitten by a rabitic dog are eligible for free anti-rabitic serum through the welfare bureau if it can be established that they are poor persons within the meaning of the law. The law also requires the director of a welfare bureau to establish this fact before issuing an order for free treatment.

The hearing also established the fact that the boy had been treated by two physicians, before his parents applied for free serum, and that neither of these physicians had administered anti-rabitic serum, although it is generally known that such treatment should be provided without delay.

Other testimony brought out the inescapable fact that the family of the boy seemed to have been more intent upon securing free treatment (even though it was apparent that they were able to pay for such care) than upon taking prompt action.

The most significant fact brought out at the hearing was that Miss Coleman appeared to have been the one person involved who was aware of the need for prompt action and it was demonstrated that she did everything in her power to effect prompt action. When the boy and his grandmother appeared in her office on June 16th (two days after the boy had been bitten and his wounds dressed by two physicians) she explained to the grandmother the necessity of prompt action and attempted to secure from the grandmother information necessary to issue an order for free serum. When the grandmother was unable to supply information, Miss Coleman telephoned the boy's mother, who was ill at home, explaining the legal requirements and the need for prompt action. When the boy's mother declined to consent to being declared a poor person, saying she would have the boy treated by a private physician, the evidence shows that Miss Coleman urged her not to delay and again advised the boy's grandmother of the danger of delay.

When on the following day the grandmother and the boy, in company with a neighborhood political worker, appeared and stated that the boy had not been treated and that they wanted free treatment, Miss Coleman again telephoned the boy's mother, explaining the regulations and secured enough information upon which to base the issue of an order for free treatment. The boy died more than a month later, some time after he had received the twenty-one necessary treatments.

In addition to the vindication of Ruth Coleman, the airing of this case and the provisions of the Illinois health regulations which precluded the granting of necessary serums to persons other than self-declared paupers, has resulted in a broadening of these provisions, to permit the issuance of needed serum and treatment without the necessity of a certificate of poverty.

This case illustrates the difficulties many social workers are forced into when they are required to abide by policies and regulations laid down by law which permit no discretion on the part of professional personnel.

The Chicago Chapter, of which Miss Coleman is a member, was aware of the importance of the entire incident and protested vigorously to the *Coronet* magazine for publishing the garbled version of the affair. At the civil service hearing a committee representing the Chapter attended all the hearings, reporting to the Chapter body.

Illinois Conference Prepares for Active Campaign

Resolutions calling for modern integrated public assistance machinery and operation of essential public services on the principle of merit were among those adopted by the Illinois Conference on Social Welfare at its meeting in October at Bloomington, Illinois.

The resolutions on public assistance were as follows:

Be It Resolved by the 41st Annual Session of the Illinois Conference on Social Welfare, assembled in Bloomington, Illinois, that it devote its efforts to the problem of simplifying, improving and integrating the present wasteful and often inadequate public administration machinery devoted to public assistance, the result of overlapping taxing units, and thereby de-

velop economies of operation so that the funds now available from current taxes will not only meet present needs but meet them better than they are met now, and

Be It Further Resolved that this Conference again go on record, as it has before, for the organization of welfare services on a par with the organization of public education and public health by means of a modern integrated administrative set-up, centered in a county department of public welfare, in which the state and the federal government share financial responsibility and which shall be administered by capable and adequate public servants, chosen and retained on the principle of merit; and

Be It Further Resolved that the President of this Conference be asked to name a committee of seven, to be known as the Committee of Administrative Reorganization to employ and retain legal and other personnel for the purpose of preparing and having introduced in the next General Assembly bills to modify existing statutes and to create new ones for the purpose of simplifying, improving, and integrating our current overlapping, inadequate and wasteful public administrative machinery devoted to public assistance; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Committee on Administrative Reorganization enlist the aid and cooperation of the various organizations interested in taxation, and all other organizations and citizens devoted to good government and opposed to wasteful effort, to the one end that the obligation of the sovereign State of Illinois to those in real need be more adequately met, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Committee on Administrative Reorganization be charged to make bimonthly reports of its progress to the executive committee of this Conference until its objectives shall be attained.

On the merit system, the Conference stated its position in the following resolutions:

Whereas, the Illinois Conference on Social Welfare has repeatedly endorsed the principle of merit in the selection and retention of all local, state, and federal welfare employees; and

Whereas, the present state civil service law penalizes the civil service employee in that it requires a discharged employee to prove that he was discharged for religious, racial, or political reasons rather than protecting him by making the discharging officer prove the discharge was for good cause; and

Whereas, large numbers of state welfare employees, heads of institutions, and division and code officers do not come within the scope of the civil service law; and

Whereas, the public services rendered by the State Departments of Welfare, Health, and Labor are so closely related to specifically human problems:

Be It Resolved by the Illinois Conference on Social Welfare that these essential public services affecting persons, be once and for all time taken out of politics and operated on the principle of merit; and

Be It Further Resolved that this Conference be pledged to a thorough-going revision of the state civil service law; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Committee on Administrative Reorganization be charged with the preparation and ultimate passage of bills to make these changes effective, calling upon the organizations already referred to for aid and cooperation, to the end that the forces of good government may present a common front to make merit in the public service prevail.

HOUSING NEWS

The arrangement inaugurated by the Information Service of the Housing Committee to supply persons interested in housing with available literature apparently struck a responsive chord. Twenty-four persons requested the

* * *

The National Association of Housing Officials held its annual meeting on December 4th and 5th in Philadelphia. Discussions on selection of tenants and other topics on housing of interest to social workers constituted the program.

* * *

A new handbook on the market is Carol Aronivici and Elizabeth McCalmont's "Catching Up With Housing" which contains facts, figures and illustrations of the housing problem in the United States. It is being distributed by Baker and Taylor, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City at $2.00 per copy.

* * *

According to an announcement made on October 10th by the Resettlement Administration, $187,323.03 has been added to the United States Treasury from rental payments of families in Resettlement communities.

* * *

On October 20th, Hopkins Place, a low-rental housing development was opened by the Alley Dwelling Authority for the District of Columbia. The purpose, standards, costs and rentals are discussed in a report recently issued. Social workers will find this material especially interesting. Copies of the report may be obtained by writing to John Ihlder, Alley Dwelling Authority, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington, D. C.

* * *

Publications for distribution to members without charge:

No. 1—A Housing Program for the United States, National Association of Housing Officials.
2—Housing Management, Its History and Relation to Present Day Housing Problems, Beatrice G. Rosahn.
3—Activities of the Housing Committee, AASW, 1934-35 (Out of Print).
4—Services of The Federal Government to Home Owners and Tenants.
5—Urban Housing.
6—The Relation Between Housing and Delinquency.
7—Sample copy, Housing News Letter, Housing Section, Welfare Council, New York City.

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MRS. ELIZABETH MILLS,
Charity Organization Society,
1146 St. Nicholas Avenue, N. Y. C.

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Ohio Council Acts in Civil Service Suit

The Ohio Council of the Association, representing the six chapters and the members of the Association who are not in chapter territory in the state, has employed legal counsel to serve as "Friend of the Court" in a civil service suit. The suit has been brought by Lela Myers, of Kent, Ohio, to have a recent examination for visitor in county service declared invalid on the ground that she was denied permission to take the examination. The immediate issue in the case centers around the action of the State Civil Service Commission in setting qualifications. Although the Commission's qualifications are not high and although the applicant is able to present greater general education qualifications than are required, she was not admitted to the examination because of the insistence of "two years of full time paid experience in the field of social welfare."

Chiselers—Wholesale and Retail

When the word "chiseler" is used in the public prints it usually refers to some recipient of public relief. However, in Stamford, Conn., recently a number of chiselers of a different type were hailed into court. They were respectable members of the community; retail grocers, in fact, charged with chiseling the town of Stamford and relief clients.

According to the New York *Times* of November 20th, thirty-five grocers "were arraigned in the Stamford court on charges of fraud and attempted fraud against the town in connection with the handling of relief clients' food orders."

The storekeepers, seven of whom pleaded guilty, were charged with having given relief clients cash for food orders in an amount less than the face value of the order and then billing the town for the full amount of the order.

Annual Meeting of Association of Schools

For the first time in the history of the Association of Schools of Social Work, the Annual Meeting will be scheduled independently of the meetings of other societies which ordinarily convene during the Christmas holidays. In designating January 15-17, 1937, at St. Louis, the Association has accepted the very cordial invitation from Washington University to hold the Annual Meeting as a part of the celebrations attending the opening of the new Brown Memorial Building.

In experimenting with this Annual Meeting the Association has been influenced by two or three factors. Ordinarily the Association business becomes one of two or three activities for members attending the Christmas meetings. Further, the interests of the Association are so varied and distinct that a one day meeting does not give sufficient time for their consideration. Finally, the self-study of all member schools of the Association which will be a major activity during 1937 seems to make highly desirable the concentrated attention and participation of every member school at this particular occasion.

The program for the meeting includes general sessions for Friday and Saturday with a general business meeting on Saturday morning. Round tables continue through Saturday and Sunday. For information inquire of Marion Hathway, Secretary, University of Pittsburgh.

Book Reviews

Lobbying for Social Legislation. William T. Kirk. Social Work Publicity Council, New York, 1936. Price 50 cents.

With the increasing demand now being made by social workers to help in the formulation and the successful passage of progressive social legislation, the brochure, *Lobbying for Social Legislation,* is both timely and constructive.

Special commendation must be given Mr. Kirk, for presenting in as short a study as his is, a very inclusive field of facts and directives. Beginning with the iconoclastic definition which declares that a lobbyist is not "a backslapping, cigar-passing, aggressive person who accomplishes sinister ends through unscrupulous means," Mr. Kirk surveys the field of lobbying. It is, he explains, "no one person's idea of how to lobby but rather the consensus of opinion of a number of persons of long experience."

To those of us who are just becoming initiated to legislative work, the factors enumerated and described in the short pamphlet are many and important: the personal qualifications of the lobbyist; the need for interpretation to the elected officials and their constituents; the understanding of the attitudes of the legislators; the necessity to counter anti-social forces which have strong weight in the enactment of laws; the type of legislative influence needed for controversial and non-controversial legislation; and the body of information essential for anyone who intends to cut through the entanglements of law creation. Various important procedures are discussed such as bill drafting, contacts to be made before the proposed laws really get under way, and the necessary endorsements required for certain legislation as well as the use of newspaper support. All of this may be used to advantage by those of us who are coming closer to the realities of legislation.

As social workers we have long been conscious of the fact that legislators are "always kept well

aware of the needs and desires of various powerful, articulate minorities, who because of their own self-interest, may obstruct legitimate social measures."

It must, nevertheless, be reluctantly admitted that we have on many occasions held ourselves at Olympian distance and expected others to fight, interpret and win our battles. More and more are we realizing that it is our duty as professionals to stimulate, act and work diligently, assiduously and long to gain our much needed social reform measures. Conditioned as we are to impartiality, and the desire to keep out of the limelight, we have often run from the scene when an accusing finger was pointed at us and the charge made that we were interested in perpetuating what were termed selfish aims when we asked for permanent relief setups and better professional standards.

We shied on such issues because we did not know what resources we could use to counteract unfounded charges. On such matters, the pamphlet gives valuable suggestions as to what may be done from many divergent angles in the attempt to secure legislation. Our one regret is that we are not specifically warned against losing courage in encountering those pitfalls which we are bound to meet.

No matter how good the directives may be, we are still naive and immature in working for needed legislation. Set-backs, mistakes, some of them of considerable importance, will undoubtedly be our lot. The trial and error process of learning still holds to a degree and lobbying is no exception.

That the process of education in lobbying will require disciplined effort is recognized in the appearance of this pamphlet.

Its publication is also one of the indices showing that we are fast moving from the more timorous and ineffectual attitude to one of more dynamic quality.

We need hardly say at this point that Mr. Kirk's booklet should be required reading for all persons and groups interested in securing good legislation. It is hoped that the author will amplify his findings and philosophy on the problem in the near future.

MILTON SHUFRO

Children's and Minors' Service,
Chicago, Ill.

The Trouble I've Seen. Martha Gellhorn. William Morrow & Co., New York. Price $2.50.

A great void separates the run-of-the-mill "case story" drawn from a reluctant social worker for publicity purposes and the story of Jim, Joe, Pete, Ruby and others as told by Martha Gellhorn in *The Trouble I've Seen.* There would be no point in making this comparison between the literary products of a professional social worker and a professional writer, were it not for the fact that Miss Gellhorn in this book achieves something toward which case workers aspire. She makes human beings out of people in trouble. She erases categorical lines, removing the significance of such terms as "unfortunate," "economically deprived," "immoral," "unstable," and "antisocial." Out of her pages step warm-blooded human beings such as you and I, going through the same searing emotional experiences as we would have under similar circumstances.

Mrs. Madison in her shack papered with advertisements from magazines, tending her garden "with passion and delicacy" under the blistering sun, visiting her boy when he is jailed for killing his brother-in-law, is never pathetic. She has a dignity that Mrs. Astorbilt might envy. Ruby, too, searching through garbage cans and ash heaps on a cold night for a roller skate with which to make a scooter, or surrounded by heartless schoolmates making fun of her dirty, ragged clothes, has the precious love of life itself which cannot be extinguished by even the worst experiences which can befall a little girl of nine.

Joe, whose passion is justice for his fellow-workers even when he is betrayed by them; Pete, who will not believe until the last extremity that a strong man who wants to work can be defeated; Jim, who sees himself, his sister and his father economically crushed by the very strength of their creative urges—these are far more engrossing than the most spectacular and romantic heroes of literature because they come so much closer to the realities of life. Few current writers have given a more accurate picture of what it actually means to be a human being economically beset in our society.

There are no sticky spots, no sentimentalities, no moralizing in these narratives. Surely the social worker will find this book both gratifying and inspiring. It can be done; it is possible to show what it means to be in trouble. It is possible to say what needs to be said about our present-day society in terms of specific human lives in such a way (quoting from H. G. Wells in the preface to the book) as to strengthen the "resolve, to learn, to work, to persist in learning and working for such a wilfull reorganization of human life as will make these stories at last seem like an incredible nightmare of misery in the history of mankind."

HARALD H. LUND

Family Welfare Association of America
New York City.

Books Received for Review

Unemployment Relief in Periods of Depression. Leah H. Feder, Russell Sage Foundation.

Substitute Parents. Mary Buell Sayles, The Commonwealth Fund.

Proceedings, National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City. University of Chicago Press.

The Michigan Poor Law. Isabel C. Bruce & Edith Eickhoff, University of Chicago Press.

Law and Social Work. John S. Bradway, University of Chicago Press.

Three Centuries of Poor Law Administration. Margaret Creech, University of Chicago Press.

The Indiana Poor Law. Alice Schaffer, Mary Keefer, S. P. Breckinridge, University of Chicago Press.

Handbook on Social Case Recording. Margaret Cochran Bristol, University of Chicago Press.

The Theory of Social Work. Frank J. Bruno, D. C. Heath & Company.

Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency. T. Earl Sullenger, D. C. Heath & Company.

Spending to Save. Harry Hopkins, W. W. Norton & Company.

The Tenements of Chicago. Edith Abbott, University of Chicago Press.

Chicago Commons. Graham Taylor, Chicago Commons Association.

A Review of Two Charitable Trusts, Smith Memorial Playgrounds and Martin Recreation Center. Phoebe Hall Valentine, Fidelity Philadelphia Trust Company.

Supervision in Social Case Work. Virginia Robinson, University of North Carolina Press.

American Prisons. Blake McKelvey, University of Chicago Press.

The Adopted Child. Eleanor G. Gallagher, Reynal & Hitchcock.

Welfare Activities of Federal, State and Local Governments in California 1850-1934. Frances Cahn and Valeska Bary, University of California Press.

On the Educational Front. William W. Wattenburg, Columbia University Press.

Can Delinquency Be Measured? Mrs. Sophia Moses Robison, Columbia University Press.

* * *

The paper by Wayne McMillen on "The Relationship of Professional Practice to Professional Education," which was published in the November *Compass* with the permission of the California Conference of Social Work, has been reprinted and may be secured from the national office at the usual price of *Compass* reprints (10 cents a copy). The significance of this paper has been widely recognized and members may be interested to know that it is available in reprint form.

Orders for AASW publications in amounts less than $1.00 should be accompanied by remittance.

* * *

Sixty books, out of a total of 700 which are recommended as important for their bearing on education, are listed annually in the Journal of the National Education Association. Of these sixty, a few are starred as being of particular importance to libraries and teachers.

Vocational Guidance in Action by John A. Fitch, the fifth volume in the American Association of Social Workers Job Analysis series, is one of those starred in the list which describes the book as follows: "Fifth and last volume in a job analysis series of the American Association of Social Workers. Placement is emphasized as this book by a social worker was planned for another public, but the public school teacher should be vitally interested nevertheless. Gives a decidedly worthwhile and interesting picture of the daily duties of the vocational guidance counselor."

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SOCIAL WORK BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH

THIS BUSINESS OF RELIEF (Proceedings of the Delegate Conference, American Association of Social Workers, Washington, D. C., February 14-16, 1936) offers important material for both board members and social case workers. It presents various aspects of the problem of relief following a summary and review of recent past events and circumstances; certain papers show important facts about the people who need relief and about prevalent misconceptions in regard to them; situations are described as they were developing in a number of states in February, 1936, when the effects of the federal withdrawal from a co-operative relation with the states on a direct relief program was beginning to be felt; current programs—work, security, and privately supported programs—sometimes assumed to be substitutes for a general relief system, are examined; and one report deals with some of the facts about local and state resources available for relief.

The various papers might well be studied as a basis for evaluating any social program designed to meet the needs of human beings—and, perhaps even more important, for determining the rôle of board members and professional workers in relation to it. (American Association of Social Workers, or THE FAMILY, $1.00.)

from *The Family* Nov. 1936

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